

AMENDMENTS TO SPECIFICATION

Page 7, last paragraph:

Referring to FIG. 4, the handle 20 and shaft 30 assemblies are shown. In one embodiment of the present invention, the central rod 14 passes through an aperture 19 in the proximal aspect of the firing handle 21. Immediately posterior to the aperture 19, the central rod 14 passes through an opening in a leaf spring 18, which secures the central rod 14 in place during firing of the ligator. ~~The pawl 72 moves with the firing handle 21 to engage the ratchet 74 of the central rod to pull the inner cylinder 12 through the outer cylinder 11 and eject one of the rubber bands from the surface of the inner cylinder.~~

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It is anticipated that other alternative configurations of the spring clip 18 may be include any means of temporarily securing the central rod 14 to the firing handle 21 mechanism. By way of example, as shown in FIG. 7, the spring clip 18 may be replaced with serrations 74 along the central rod 14. In this manner, pulling the firing handle 21 withdraws the rod 14 by means of a ratchet mechanism. In the ratchet configuration, a first spring 72 is used to draw the serrated central rod 14 rearward and a second spring 18 is used to stabilize and prevent forward slippage of the central rod 14.

In one configuration of the present invention, the handle assembly 20 includes a firing handle 21 having two opposing grips 22 and 23, a pivot 24 and a spring 25. The firing handle 21 is articulated by means of a pivot 24, and is returned to the original position after firing by means of a spring 25 located within the grips 22, 23. During firing, the central rod 14 is retracted by the firing handle 21 by means of a slidable spring clip 72 ~~pawl 75~~ and ratchet serrations 74, which secures the central rod 14 to the firing handle 21 during firing. The central rod 14 is retracted by activating the firing handle 21 by the two opposing grips 22 and 23. Retraction of the central rod 14 causes the inner cylinder 12 to retract and forces the rubber bands 13 off the end of the inner cylinder 12.

To reload the inner cylinder 12, ~~the central rod 14 can be rotated about its longitudinal axis to disengage its ratchet teeth 74 from the pawl 72 and spring 76, thus freeing the central rod and the~~

inner cylinder for longitudinal movement the spring clip 18 or ratchet mechanism is disengaged from central rod 14, so releasing the central rod 14. The central rod 14 may then be advanced forward and the inner cylinder 12 may be detached for reloading or replacement. The inner cylinder 12 may then be detached and replaced with a preloaded cylinder or reloaded. Once the inner cylinder 12 is replaced, the central rod 14 is returned to its original position, and the spring 18 and pawl 72 are re-engaged with the ratchet mechanism back to their original positions prior to firing.